

VZCZCXRO0980
OO RUEHDA
DE RUEHAK #2953/01 3471438
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 131438Z DEC 07
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4634
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC//PA
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 8549
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 3620
RUEHDA/AMCONSUL ADANA 2519
RUEHBS/AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS 6310
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 6126
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2712
RUEUITH/DET 1 39LG ANKARA TU
RHMFISS/USDOCO 6ATAF IZMIR TU
RHMFISS/39OS INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFISS/AFOSI DET 523 IZMIR TU
RHMFISS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU
RHMFISS/AFOSI DET 522 INCIRLIK AB TU
RUEUITH/AFLO ANKARA TU

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002953

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2007

In Today's Papers

Debate on Amnesty and PKK
Radikal, Turkiye, Cumhuriyet, Aksam, Yeni Safak, Milliyet, Sabah and others: Responding to journalists, Prime Minister Erdogan said the government is not working on a new "return home law," instead, they are trying to expand and increase the flexibility of the existing Article 221 in the Turkish Penal Code. Mainstream Sabah quotes PM Erdogan as saying "we can stretch article 221 and make it different. The purpose here is to prevent new people from joining the PKK and enable those who are in the mountains who have not committed a crime to return to their parents.

Okay Gonensin commented in mainstream daily Vatan (12/13): "A compilation of PM Erdogan's statements on the Kurdish issue and on terrorism since he came to power demonstrates that he does not have a clear vision on these issues. It looks as if developments force him to explain his stance, and later he says something else to deny the first statement. A very similar attitude can be seen in the 'coming home' or repentance for PKK militants debate. The support of 47 percent of the electorate requires a leader to make his views and arguments clear and then proceed accordingly. We keep hearing 'social, economic and legal measures' to end terror, yet this rhetoric will bounce around like clichs until we see a vision of what exactly is meant. So far, he has handled the issue through a crisis management approach and this has not lead to a lasting solution. PM Erdogan, unfortunately, does not seem to have any concrete plan even though he makes 'coming home' calls to militants. The gist is that Ankara does not really know whether they want a real solution or not. So, we will keep seeing this lurching around."

Derya Sazak commented in mainstream daily Milliyet (12/13): "PM Erdogan announced a plan which supposedly both the government and military are working on. Meanwhile, Chief of General Staff General Buyukanit expressed concern over the DTP's attitude in the parliament by saying 'terrorism has been politicized and legalized.' The general also opposed a possible amnesty saying 'encouraging

steps for the terrorist organization should be avoided.' Given the events so far, it seems that the military they continue their struggle for security on one hand, while they also prevent governments from taking civilian steps on the other. When Ocalan was handed over and put in prison in 1999, Turkey had a chance to initiate civilian steps that would have been helped to disarm the PKK completely. This opportunity was not taken between 1999 to 2005 at all. The year 2007 was spent in the midst of military losses and debates over cross border operations. Now, the government is trying to disarm the PKK by using an article in the penal code. It does not seem right to oppose this effort before seeing the actual results. And it does not seem right to denounce the DTP by using 'the PKK is in the parliament' rhetoric. Can we let the government and all political parties work together on the goal of ending terrorism? Otherwise, we may end up seeing another future statement admitting the mistakes of the past."

Reactions to Gen. Buyukanit Remarks that the "PKK has been legalized and politicized"

Mainstream Milliyet reports that an MHP Deputy Chairman criticized General Buyukanit's remarks on the PKK and said "Buyukanit's words were a confession of failure and, therefore, the TGS Chief should resign. Mainstream Sabah writes that DTP party board member Ahmet Turk said to journalists at a TUSIAD reception that "we entered the parliament through democratic elections and our aim is to exert efforts to decrease tensions in Turkey." Mainstream Hurriyet says the DTP released a written statement calling Buyukanit's words "unfortunate" and added the comments will not effect the court case on the closure of the DTP.

NGOs Call for Individual-Oriented New Constitution

Liberal Radikal and leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet report that the

ANKARA 00002953 002 OF 002

'Constitution Conciliation Platform' criticized the AKP's constitutional draft and said that the NGO's views should be considered as the new constitution is prepared. Meanwhile, speaking at his party's Central Administrative Board, CHP leader Deniz Baykal said that 'the country is being pulled towards religious hegemony. The AKP government presents the new constitutional draft as a 'civilian constitution,' but it will be the last stop in the establishment of a state of religion."

They also carried the communique issued by the Platform which is composed of a vast variety of Turkish NGOs, including businessmen, women rights and bar associations. The communique calls for an 'individual oriented' new constitution with gender equality. Positive discrimination for women is also encouraged. 'Any limitation on freedoms and rights must be defined in clear terms while parliamentary immunity should be limited to speech' the communique suggested. The Constitution Platform plans to introduce its recommendations to the parliament soon.

Turkey-EU/Sarkozy

Mainstream Hurriyet and Milliyet report that, at a TUSIAD reception, PM Erdogan criticized the EU and French President Sarkozy for creating problems in Turkey's EU bid and said "Mr. Sarkozy has one attitude in bilateral talks, and adopts another the minute I turn my back."

TV Highlights

NTV

Domestic News

The Court of Appeals General Council approved expulsion of Mustafa Sarigul from the CHP

Canadian specialist Dr. Max Vermij says that the plane crash in Isparta does not look like an accident caused by pilot error

The Turkish ISAF mission returned home from Afghanistan after handing over command to Italy

A lieutenant doctor went missing during military operations in

Sirnak

International News

Three car bombs exploded in southern Iraq on Wednesday killing 40 people and injuring 125

Israeli-Palestinian peace talks start after nearly seven years

Lebanon explosion kills military general

Al-Qaeda claims bloody Algiers bombing.

WILSON